

Behavioral Interviewing

Advanced Section: Step #6

Determine Interview Format:
Who and How

Objectives

- ◆ At the completion of this section you should be able to:
 - ◆ Discuss the advantages/disadvantages of one person vs. group interviewing.
 - ◆ Describe steps to take before beginning the interview.
 - ◆ Describe five important points to avoid interview bias.

Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ An interview can be successfully conducted by one person or a group or panel of people.



Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ Advantages of a single interviewer:
 - ◆ Interviews are easy to schedule.
 - ◆ Less stress for applicants.
 - ◆ Fewer interviewers equates to savings of money and time.

Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ Disadvantages of a single interviewer:
 - ◆ One person assumes responsibility for decision. This can be difficult if a poor choice is made.
 - ◆ Interviewer bias is more likely to occur.
 - ◆ More heads are better than one.

Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ Advantages of a group or panel interview:
 - ◆ More people get a chance to assess applicants.
 - ◆ Spreads decision responsibility.
 - ◆ Improves the validity and accuracy of selection.
 - ◆ Legal defensibility is very strong.
 - ◆ Fosters buy-in of selection decision.
 - ◆ Interviews look fairer to applicants.

Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ Disadvantages of a panel interview:
 - ◆ Takes up time of more people, thus more costly.
 - ◆ Interviews are more difficult to schedule.
 - ◆ Interviewees may be taken by surprise, if not forewarned.
 - ◆ Consistency is dependant upon availability of panel members for all interviews.

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ Disadvantages of a panel interview (continued):
 - ◆ Perceptions:
 - Takes up too much time
 - Usurps decision of manager
 - Bad public relations

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ To decide on one interviewer or a panel, ask the questions:
 - ◆ Do I have the time and people to support a panel interview?
 - ◆ How important is the position to the overall organization?
 - ◆ Is this a position where a group decision is advantageous from a buy-in perspective?

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ To decide on one interviewer or a panel, ask the questions (continued):
 - ◆ Is this a decision I want to make myself?
 - ◆ Are there multiple positions to be filled from this series of interviews?

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ If one person will conduct the interviews, the immediate supervisor is usually the best choice.



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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ The immediate supervisor has the most at stake and has to:
 - ◆ Take responsibility for the decision.
 - ◆ Live with the decision day in and day out.
 - ◆ Deal with any disciplinary issues.

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ If a panel will conduct the interview, decide:
 - ◆ How many
 - ◆ Who will comprise the panel

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ Usually panels consist of two, three, or four people.
 - ◆ Large numbers are unwieldy
 - ◆ Large numbers intimidate applicants.
 - ◆ Use odd numbers to reduce the likelihood of a split decision.

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ To decide who should comprise the panel, ask the question, who will:
 - ◆ Have a vested interest in this employee?
 - ◆ Supervise this employee?
 - ◆ Know what it takes to do the job?
 - ◆ Work, day after day, with this employee?
 - ◆ Deal with difficulties the employee may have?

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

- ◆ Panel members may include:
 - ◆ The immediate supervisor.
 - ◆ The supervisor's supervisor.
 - ◆ A peer who may function as a mentor.
 - ◆ An outside objective person.
 - ◆ A team member
 - ◆ An internal customer

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Conducting an Interview: The Who

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Panel members may include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Someone who will have close contact with the person from a different department. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Someone who knows the job well.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ A technical expert for a technical job◆ A content expert for a knowledge-based job.◆ Someone who can predict future aspects of the job. |
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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ Decide who's in charge:
 - ◆ If one person will interview, this is not an issue.
 - ◆ If a panel will interview, usually it's the immediate supervisor.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ Follow these steps to prepare for the interview:
 - ◆ Analyze the job (refer to section #1).
 - ◆ Develop behavioral questions specific for the job (refer to section #4).

If using a panel, involve all members as much as possible.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ Decide the order of the questions:
 - ◆ Hints:
 - ◆ Start and end with an easy question.
For example:

Good starting question: "What motivates you to succeed in a position? Give me an example."

Good ending question: "Is there anything else you think I should know before making a decision about who I select for this position?"

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ Decide the order of the questions (continued):
 - ◆ Hints:
 - ◆ Alternate hard and easy questions
 - ◆ If using job simulations, alternate with easier questions.
 - ◆ Alternate long and short questions.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ Follow these steps to prepare for the interview:
 - ◆ If using a panel, decide who will ask which questions and in what order.
 - ◆ Decide who you will interview based on HMRS recommendations and additional sources of information (refer to section #3).

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ Follow these steps to prepare for the interview (continued):
 - ◆ Review the questions, applications, resumes, etc. (refer to section #5).
 - ◆ Put the questions in a format that will allow you to document responses to each question.
 - ◆ Decide how you will rate each answer (more about this later).

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ As you alone or with a panel prepare to interview, review methods for reducing interview bias.



Bias is a part of human nature and we have to work hard and purposefully to avoid the bias trap.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

Know common rating errors and realize which ones are most likely to produce bias.

- ◆ First impressions
- ◆ Gut feeling
- ◆ Stereotyping
- ◆ Contrast effect
- ◆ Halo effect
- ◆ Similar to me
- ◆ Accuracy of recall
- ◆ False values

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ First impressions:

Most impressions are made in the first four to five minutes of an encounter before important questions have been asked. This produces a closed mind for most of an interview.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself, "Do I size up an applicant in the first few minutes?"

If yes, concentrate on responses to questions throughout the interview and rate against behaviors.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ Halo effect:

Developing a global impression based on one trait--may be negative or positive. A nice smile, a confident style, speaks well = a qualified candidate.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself, "Does one outstanding trait or characteristic jump out at me for each applicant?"

If yes, rate applicants on the sum total of qualities based on job criteria.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ Gut feeling:

The feeling you get from the feeling you got.

Reliance on intuition about the person rather than information obtained from the interview.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself, "Am I judging applicants by how I feel about them?"

If yes, go back to the criteria for success you developed and ask "How does this candidate excel in this job related element?"

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ Similar to me:

Physical characteristics, background, or values that are like yours.

Causes an interviewer to overlook qualities that may or may not be suited for the job.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself, "Do my preferences in applicants look similar to me or have similar qualities?"

If yes, evaluate the attributes of applicants against the job criteria.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ Stereotyping:

Evaluating applicants because they belong to a certain class, group, race, age range, etc.

Applicants may be either accepted or rejected because of a group they belong to.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself, "Does one trait or characteristic jump out at me and cause me to reach a determination about the person?"

If yes, judge applicants against job criteria.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ Accuracy of recall:

Rate applicants based on your memory of the interview.

If several applicants are competing, memories are likely to forget important aspects of the interview.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself during the interview, "Am I failing to document responses to each question?"

If yes, document, document, document--during and immediately after the interview.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ Contrast effect:

Rating one applicant against another applicant.

Makes applicants look particularly weak or strong depending on who preceded them.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself, "Do I rate candidates against each other?"

If yes, concentrate on rating responses against job criteria upon which all applicants should be measured.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ False values:

Unconscious comparison to values not related to job criteria.

Produces a lack of diversity, talent, and new ideas in the work environment.

◆ To avoid this error:

Ask yourself, "Have I selected a particular group/class as desirable employees."

If yes, concentrate on job related attributes during the interview.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

◆ Other hints to reduce bias:

- ◆ Don't discuss applicants between interviews--discuss all applicants after the final interview.
- ◆ Don't compare scores until the end.
- ◆ Document well so that more recent applicants do not have an advantage over others.
- ◆ Document actual responses or bits of responses.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

Finally, decide on how you will score responses to questions.

Generally each question should be scored individually--against job criteria.

At the end, a total score should be calculated and compared to other scores.

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Conducting an Interview: The How

Some suggestions for scoring. Ask, "Did the response match the job needs for each question?"

Use a two score method:

Yes/No
+/-
1/0

Use a three score method:

Yes/Partially/No
+/0/-
2/1/0

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ At the end, calculate the number of positive scores against the total number of possible points.

If using +/-:

- ◆ 8 positives
- ◆ 10 questions
- ◆ $8/10 = 80\%$

If using 1/0:

- ◆ 8 questions scored 1
- ◆ 10 questions = possible score of 10
- ◆ Final score = $8/10$

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ Now you are ready to conduct the interview. You know:
 - ◆ Who will interview
 - ◆ How the interview will be conducted
 - ◆ How the questions will be scored
 - ◆ How responses will be documented
 - ◆ How to avoid interview bias

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Conducting an Interview: The How

- ◆ If you need to know more about the actual interview, review Advanced Section #7 and,
- ◆ Good luck and may you make the best choice.

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